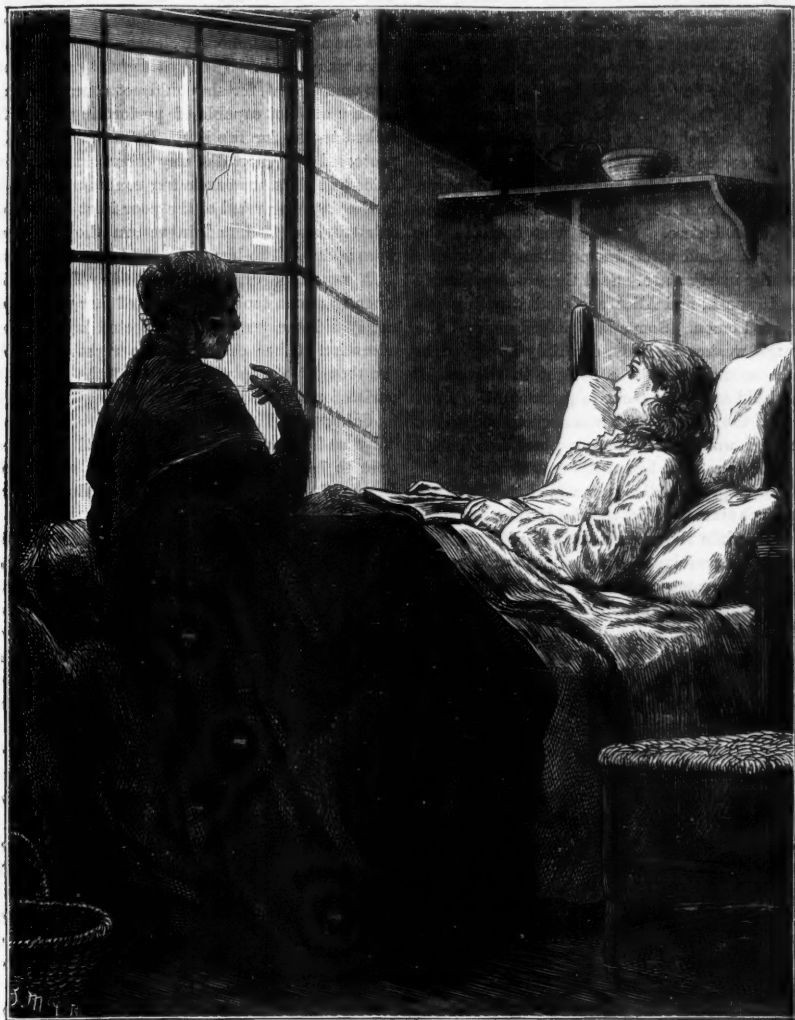


THE DUTY

Saturday, September 28, 1872.



"Alice placed the book open before her"—p. 819.

TWO STORIES IN ONE.

BY WILLIAM GILBERT, AUTHOR OF "DE PROFUNDIS," "SHIRLEY HALL ASYLUM," ETC.

CHAPTER LII.—THE PICTURE-BOOK.

NOTWITHSTANDING the disappointment Alice felt in finding that her daughter did not understand her words when speaking to her of the Almighty, she determined to persevere in her attempts. Each

morning she knelt by her bedside, and when offering her usual prayer, the poor idiot watched her most attentively, and always placed her hands together in careful imitation of her mother. Alice now, instead of

commencing with her usual prayer, repeated audibly, slowly, and distinctly the Lord's prayer, watching her child attentively as she did so. Presently she had the unspeakable gratification to notice the girl's lips moving. She did not, however, utter one word, and it was evident she was simply imitating the movement she saw on her mother's lips. Little as she had gained, that little was a source of immense consolation to Alice. She now compared the utterly senseless state her daughter had been in up to a few days before with the extraordinary improvement she had since made, and what was still more consoling, that improvement seemed to increase as time passed on.

The following day Alice again repeated her prayer, and the idiot imitated her movements with still more exactitude than before. On the next occasion she went still further, and uttered some attempt at words, though totally inarticulate. Still there was evidently the desire to speak, and Alice accepted it with gratitude as a good omen. Some days passed on, and the idiot, though weaker in body, certainly improved in mind. She seemed to take a delight in the act of prayer, and did anything occur to prevent Alice from beginning at the moment she was accustomed to do, the poor girl would immediately place her hands together as if to remind her of the omission.

To the Lord's prayer Alice now added the Apostles' Creed, and each time the idiot seemed to take a greater interest in it, while the sounds she uttered began to assume more the semblance of articulate words. One day, when she commenced the Apostles' Creed, repeating it with unusual slowness and distinctness, Alice had hardly said the words "I believe in God," when her daughter unmistakably pronounced the word "God" after her. The following day one or two monosyllables, both in the Lord's prayer and the creed, were distinctly uttered by the idiot, and she exhibited great anxiety to imitate more, her mother assisting her by repeating the words over and over again, with unremitting patience and gentleness.

It is unnecessary to go further through the attempts Alice made to instruct her child in the Lord's prayer and the creed. Suffice it to say she at last succeeded, and the poor idiot was able to repeat both after her with tolerable distinctness, not only to the accustomed quick ear of the mother, but to that of Mrs. Watkins as well.

The girl had now obtained sufficient use of her mental faculties to have a crude, though very obscure knowledge of the Deity, and Alice viewed her altered condition with great satisfaction. One discovery, however—and a plain one, too—created considerable alarm in Alice's mind. The girl could repeat the Lord's prayer and the creed, besides a simple prayer her mother had taught her, with tolerable accuracy and distinctness, and without being prompted by her. The question now suddenly occurred to Alice—to whom was the child really praying? To her great sorrow the answer was—to herself and not to

God. Nor was this interpretation without good and sufficient cause, for Alice had, unhappily, but unwittingly, inculcated in the mind of her child that she possessed in her own person all the principal attributes of the Deity, and in return her child worshipped her. The first knowledge the idiot had acquired from Alice's teaching was the existence of unbounded love, and the next, that of omniscience—for to her daughter Alice was allwise. To the poor girl, again, her mother was omnipotent, for she could not conceive an act her mother was not capable of performing. She further looked to her for life itself, for no other hand fed or protected her, nor did any other arm support her. Alice had thus unconsciously concentrated to herself in the dawning mind of the poor idiot all the highest attributes of God, and in return the girl's prayers were addressed to her and not to the Almighty.

It would be difficult to describe Alice's distress, when this idea took possession of her mind, and earnestly did she pray to be directed how to turn the adoration of her child into the right way. At last she thought of applying to one of the curates of the parish for advice, though she felt a great repugnance to doing so. Her daughter's health was, however, daily and perceptibly declining, and there was no time to be lost, so she determined she would call on one of the curates the next morning, and ask for his assistance.

The evening of the day on which Alice had made this resolution, Mrs. Watkins came in to see her. As Alice's funds were getting low, she thought it would be a good opportunity to leave her child in charge of her friend and see if she could not pick up a few pence that evening at her trade. Mrs. Watkins willingly consented to remain during her absence, and Alice, with her basket of wares proceeded to Knightsbridge, the locality which generally yielded the best returns. On arriving there, she took up her station on the usual spot, where she found the picture-dealer already in his place, but the Irishwoman was absent, the market having hardly begun.

"Glad to see you again, mother," said the man. "What's kept you away so long? you haven't been ill, I hope?"

"No," said Alice, "I've not been ill, but my poor girl has, and is so still. I don't like leaving her if I can help it, for it isn't everybody I can trust her with."

"So she's no better, isn't the poor thing?" said the picture-dealer, who was stooping down arranging his wares to the best advantage.

"No, poor thing, she falls off daily," replied Alice. "She's quite helpless now, and sorely as it would grieve me to lose her, I can't shut my eyes to the truth."

The Irishwoman now joined them, and Alice, uncovering her basket, turned to the foot passengers, with her back to the road, and eagerly looked for some of her usual customers.

"They're the cheapest things I ever had to sell," said the picture-dealer to a respectable-looking woman, holding a boy by the hand, who had stopped before the umbrella. "They were published at a shilling a piece to the trade, and now I'm offering them to you at twopence. You wouldn't get such a picture-book between this and St. Paul's for three times the money, even if you took off a whole edition at a time. What I'm telling you is the truth, and you may depend upon it. A handsomer present you couldn't make to the young gentleman. And I'm sure you'd like to have one," he continued, addressing the boy, "wouldn't you, my dear?"

The boy grinned, and looked entreatingly in his mother's face, who took the book from the man's hand, and began turning over the leaves. Alice's eyes then for the first time fell upon it, and she saw it contained a number of coloured engravings, illustrating subjects taken from the Bible. The idea immediately struck her that, after all, she might be able to fulfil, without other aid, the duty she imagined had been imposed on her—that of developing in the mind of her idiot child the knowledge of God. While the woman was turning over in her mind whether she would purchase the book, Alice said to the man in a whisper, "Have you got any more of those books? I should like one for my girl."

The man looked at her slyly, and nodded as if he had plenty more of the same description, but said nothing, for he had just been telling the would-be purchaser that it was the last he had left. The woman bought the book and proceeded on her way. The man then stooped down behind the umbrella, and from a bag he had there took two other copies, one of which he placed inside the umbrella, and the other he gave to Alice.

"There," said he, in a very low whisper, "that's a present from me to your poor girl, but don't let the Irishwoman know I've given it, or she'll want one apiece for all her children, and there's a round dozen of 'em, I believe."

Alice thanked this odd mixture of cunning and kindness for his present, and put it in her pocket to be examined more particularly when she returned home. Trade went on now flourishingly, and Alice had the satisfaction of finding that in a pecuniary point of view she had not spent her evening unprofitably.

After reaching home, Alice first put her daughter to bed, and watched by her till she was asleep. She then took the picture-book from her pocket, and by the light of the candle carefully examined its contents. The prints were of a very common order, and gaudily coloured; yet on the latter account they were perhaps the easier to catch the eye and understanding of the poor idiot. The first among them was a picture representing the Almighty looking over a cloud, and separating the sun, moon, and stars. This, Alice resolved, should be the first lesson, and she then examined the other plates—there were about a dozen

in all—and arranged in her mind in what order she would bring them under the notice of her daughter so as to explain them to the best advantage.

The following morning, after Alice had dressed her child, and their regular prayers had been offered up, she asked the assistance of one of the lodgers, and moved the bed from the corner in which it usually stood, to the side of the room nearest the window. This was done with a view of practically explaining to her daughter the lesson taught by the first engraving in the book. The bedstead having been removed, and the anxiety of the idiot girl at so unusual an occurrence having subsided, Alice placed the book open before her.

The girl looked at the picture attentively, and then turned her eyes with an inquiring expression to her mother's face. Alice pointed to the picture, and pronounced emphatically the name of God, which her child repeated after her. This she did several times over, to impress it on her memory, and then placed her finger on the picture of the sun. The idiot now seemed more puzzled than ever, but at that moment—greatly to Alice's delight—a dark cloud passed from before the sun, and his rays shone brightly into the room. Alice had now an opportunity of explaining to her child (and evidently she understood her) that God was above the sun, and had made it. When night came on, the stars were shining brightly, and Alice again opened the book, and pointed out to her the picture of the moon and stars represented in it.

These lessons were continued day by day, and Alice, as she advanced through the different pictures in the book, had the great satisfaction of finding the intelligence of her daughter increase on each occasion. The blessing of Heaven seemed to be upon her work. But in proportion as the poor idiot girl increased in intelligence, her body became weaker. She now sank rapidly, and about a month after the purchase of the picture-book, she died.

The blow at first was a severe one to Alice, but when she came to think calmly over it, she easily understood that the change her daughter had undergone was from misery on earth to eternal happiness in heaven, and this gradually helped to console her.

The funeral over, Alice began to determine in what way she could obtain a subsistence for the remainder of her days. Her sight was rapidly failing, and from constantly standing on the cold pavement selling her wares, she suffered severely from rheumatism, and found it would be impossible for her to continue that occupation much longer. Her friend Mrs. Watkins had at last been obliged to enter the workhouse, and she strongly persuaded Alice to follow her example. This at first Alice greatly objected to, but at last found she had better give way. She now sold off the trifling goods she possessed, which barely realised sufficient to pay off her few debts (including her daughter's funeral) and then placing her brass tumbler and the picture-book in the bag containing

the other principal memorials of her life, she entered the workhouse, without either possessing or owing a penny in the world, and with no more worldly goods than the humble dress she wore, and the memorial bag which she carried on her arm.

CHAPTER LIII.

A SURPRISE.

BEFORE I commenced the last few chapters of Alice's history, which, as I before stated, were narrated to me by Mrs. Watkins, I had resolved they should terminate my memoirs, believing nothing more could occur to me that would be of the slightest interest to the reader. In this, however, I was in error, at least, if what followed could possess a thousandth part of the interest to others it does to me.

When I had finished the last chapter, and fortunately before sending it to the publisher's, the idea crossed my mind that I would place aside Alice's memorials and my own together, and lock them up in my wardrobe, where they should remain as long as I should live, leaving others to do what they pleased with them at my death. This determination had no sooner been formed than I made preparations to put it into execution. I first purchased a small box with a good lock and key, resolving to place in it all the memorials of Alice's and my own life (with the exception of the diamond brooch), and then I intended depositing it in my wardrobe, that it might be under double lock and key. When the box was sent home I ordered it to be taken to my bedroom, and telling my maid I should not require her for some time, I shut myself up in my room, and collected together the different articles I wished to place carefully away.

In a very short time I began to perceive that I had made an error in the size of the box I had purchased, it being too small to hold all the memorials, or at any rate, if I succeeded in making it do so, they would have to be packed away with great nicety. I first placed in it Alice's French Bible, which, on my father's direction, I had given her the day of my marriage, after writing her name in it; then came the feather ball with Alice's handwriting on the outside. As I held the poor boy's plaything in my hand, I could recall to memory every episode connected with his death as clearly as if his mother had narrated it to me an hour before. It must have been a terrible blow indeed to her, for, apart from his being a very sweet-tempered child, he was certainly the most beautiful I ever saw in my life.

The next thing I took up was the letter and pen-and-ink sketch of an officer in uniform, both the artist and the writer being, as the reader is aware, my first husband—for by the laws of England he was so, though the French law took a contrary view of our marriage. At first I was on the point of throwing the letter indignantly into the box, folded as it was,

but on doing so it opened, and exposed its contents to my sight. I do not know how it was, but without the slightest particle of love for the man who wrote it, without the slightest disrespect for the memory of my late dear husband, I gazed at it thoughtfully for some moments, though I am unable to state what my impressions at the time were, beyond their having been of the saddest. Possibly the idea might have occurred to me how cruelly the brilliant prospects I had painted for myself, when rich in the happiness of the writer's love, had been broken. Even the base treatment I had received at his hands, the utterly worthless creature he had proved himself to be, and the contempt and aversion I had held him in during nearly one-half of my life, were for the moment hidden from me by the remembrance of the girlish love I bore for him at the time his letter was received.

I seated myself with the open letter in my hand for many minutes, recalling rapidly the bygone days. Then the figure of my husband, as he stood as a witness in the French law court, declaring on his oath that he had never shown me a letter stated to be written by his father, consenting to our union, came before me, and with it returned the utter contempt I bore for him. As soon as this feeling at his dastardly act was subdued, I rose from my seat, and folding up the letter, was on the point of placing it in the box, when the question occurred to me—Was a relic of the kind worth keeping? I remained for a moment with my hand containing the letter over the box, undecided what I should do, when suddenly I felt ashamed of the power it had possessed in recalling to my memory the unworthy man who had written it. And then the probability came before me that on another occasion when I saw it it might produce the same effect; and would a feeling of the kind, though transient, be respectful to my late dear husband? No, the better plan would be to destroy it at once, and thus do away with the temptation it would afford me to think again of the time when I felt myself happy in the writer's love. I now, with perfect coolness, tore up the letter, threw it into the fire, and stood calmly watching it as it burnt—no indifferent proof of how completely all love for M. de Vernieu had perished.

The next thing I took up was the tobacco-stopper which had been given by Alice to her husband in token of submission a short time after their marriage. That, too, told of some terrible episodes connected with her life. Then the idea flashed across my mind whether Alice, in keeping the relic with so much care, had not shown me an example which I ought to have followed; and if so, was I wrong in destroying M. de Vernieu's letter? No. On thinking calmly on the subject no perfect comparison could be drawn between the two cases. Brutal as Morgan's treatment of his wife had been, at least he had not only acknowledged himself as her husband, but one cause of the quarrels at the latter part of his life was the coldness she exhibited towards him. I had then no reason to regret the

destruction of the letter, and I resolved to think no more about it.

And now came the picture-book. Before placing it in the box, I turned over its leaves, and thought of the long, arduous task Alice must have had in impressing on the mind of her idiot child any idea of Scripture truths beyond that of the vaguest description. Whatever might have been wanting in the girl's mind to understand the lessons her mother had taught her, she, poor woman, had been fully satisfied with the result, and this idea gave her no slight cause for contentment during the last few years of her life.

Next came the garnet brooch. How different was its history from that of my diamond brooch. Very possibly every stone in it that was missing might have marked in Alice's mind the destruction of some prospective happiness at the time she had received it. I do not know why, but I seemed to respect the garnet brooch more than any other of Alice's relics, and the reason for this I should have had much difficulty in explaining to myself.

And now came the christening mug. Why this should have remained so long without being applied to any use I cannot tell, for I think I before stated that the inscription I had caused to be engraved on it when intended as a present for my godchild, had been erased. Yet there it remained, duller perhaps than when it first came from the silversmith's, and yet the same. In some unaccountable manner it appeared to have followed me to every change of residence. I remember to have seen it at Dover; that fact being recalled to my mind from a little quarrel I had with Adeline about it, she wishing to use it habitually as her own, and I objecting. Why I should have refused her I hardly know, unless from a superstitious feeling that from the fact of my little godchild having died, it might prove also an ill omen to Adeline. Absurd as the reason may appear to the reader, I have no better to offer. I also had it at Dresden, and I remember explaining to Sir Thomas Morpeth its history, but at the time his mind was possibly more interested in the fate of the godmother than of the godchild, and I forget what remarks he made about it. I remember also it was at the Hall among the family plate, but how it came to leave the other articles, most of them having been sold, I know not. It went to India with me, for when there I tried to summon up courage to give it to one of my grandchildren, but the idea of its being an ill omen again deterred me.

The next thing that came under my hand was the silver watch which my brother Edmond had given me as a keepsake. This, like the christening mug, had accompanied me through life wherever I went. I used to see it so frequently that it seldom brought the face of my brother Edmond before me, but now that I was about to place it aside with my other "memories" it did so with great vividness. Although other circumstances had occurred to me which had caused me more poignant sorrow than my brother

Edmond's behaviour, that last token had always left a deep impression on my mind. Nor was this to be wondered at. No sister ever loved brother more fondly than I loved him; nor do I believe, despite his disgraceful conduct, it would be easy to find a brother who had been fonder of his sister. When we were children together it was a favourite idea of mine to trace the glorious career which, I was sure, was before him: why I know not, for there was nothing about Edmond out of the common way. He was a good-natured lad enough, fond of his parents and generally obedient, never showing any vicious tendencies beyond being a little headstrong. After he had left school, however, he had shown a greater obstinacy of disposition, and an inclination to set the wishes of his father at defiance. And even here there was, in my mind at least, an extenuating circumstance. His rebellious tendency arose from an ardent love for a soldier's life; and I, from reasons that the reader will easily understand, looked upon the military profession with no less admiration than he did, and thus I could find for his behaviour considerable mitigation.

But then, again, how terrible the shock his dishonesty had proved to my dear father. I am fully convinced it was almost as dreadful a blow to him as the unfortunate issue of my trial. One struck him down, the other crushed him when fallen. I shall never forget his sorrow that dreadful night when he sat up expecting Edmond's return, trying in vain to close his eyes to the fact that he had absconded with the money entrusted to him, and yet each succeeding moment it persisted in thrusting itself more clearly before him. Never shall I forget the piercing tone of his voice, when in the early morning I called his attention to my presence. He raised his eyes to heaven, and quoting from the French Bible (for I am fully convinced that when he prayed, his thoughts were in that language even to the last days of his life) said, "O my son, my son, would God I had died for thee, my son, my son!" It was indeed a bitter blow to all of us; but while my mother and myself tried to drown the memory of it, and partially succeeded, to the last days of his life it weighed as heavily on my father's honourable mind as it did the moment the truth became apparent to him, although he had sufficient self-control to conceal it.

The silver watch was placed carefully away, and I now took up the last relic, the baby's knitted sock. The box was already so full I found some difficulty in placing it with the other articles. On attempting to press it down, it struck me there was something inside the sock, and feeling it more carefully I could distinguish such was the case. I now drew from it a folded piece of paper containing some substance. This I opened, and found it to contain another paper enveloping something within it. On unfolding the latter, to my intense astonishment, my mother's broken emerald earring dropped from it.

(To be continued.)

IN THE TWILIGHT HOURS.



I.
LEAR shines the rose-light in the west,
The cushat murmurs on her nest;
The daisy, bathed in evening dew,
Takes rest, to bloom the morn anew.

II.
The red sun flushes o'er the vines,
Its glory lights the sombre pines;
It steeps in gold the furze-clad fells,
And tinges all the pale bluebells.

III.
Balm doth the white syringa shed
Upon the night; her velvet head
The violet pansy slow uprears,
To catch the Twilight's silver tears.

IV.
A thrush sits on the apple-spray,
Singing farewell unto the day;

And as the air grows dusk and dim
The sweeter comes his vesper hymn.

V.
O'er the rich orchard, all ablow,
The pear-trees strew their scented snow;
The summer grass grows green and rank,
The glowworms gild the neighbouring bank.

VI.
The grey moth flutters 'neath the eaves,
A faint breeze stirs the cherry leaves;
Dies off the farm-boy's homeward shout,
And one by one the lights go out

VII.
In cottage casements: and the stars
Seam Night's black robe with silver bars—
Sleep gathereth all things to her breast,
And Silence joineth hands with Rest!

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.

THE FEET OF CHRIST LIKE FINE BRASS.

BY THE REV. PHILIP B. POWER, M.A., AUTHOR OF "THE 'I WILLS' OF THE PSALMS," ETC. ETC.

"And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace."—Rev. i. 15.

SECOND PAPER.

HERE never was a greater mistake made with regard to our blessed Lord, whether considered in his life of humiliation on earth, or of glory in heaven, than to think of him as one whose lovingkindness had anything in it akin to weakness. The balance of his character forbade that.

We seldom possess a specific virtue in any striking degree without its filching from something else; very often it is not anything positive in itself, but rather a negation of something else. And judging of Christ after our own imperfect standard, we not unfrequently exalt some one of his perfections at the expense of another.

Now, here is Jesus represented as one standing in great strength. His feet are like unto fine brass. There is no yielding, no element of weakness here—nothing for mere maudlin sentiment to indulge in. And this strength had a twofold relation—one to us and one to Satan, and towards each it is put forth.

And first as regards ourselves. Now when we think of Christ, it is generally only in our relation to sin—viz., as our Saviour from its curse. It is to be feared that many of us think little comparatively of his being to us a Saviour from its power. Even of his sufferings on our behalf, how much more we think of the

physical than of the mental part! We are melted at the thought of the buffetings and spittings and scorn; of the blood flowing from the wounds. We smite our breasts and say, "Woe is me that I was the cause of all this," but we think little of the mental anguish—of the meaning of "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—of the loading down of the guilt of a world's sin on Him who was of purer eyes than to behold iniquity—on Him who shrank in horror from even its slightest stain.

It is, indeed, well that our ideas of Christ's strength should associate themselves with immense power to love, immense to save, immense to help, but all is unharmonious, incomplete, unless we see that strength in his manifested holiness also.

The way to slay sin in our daily life is to live day by day with a holy Saviour—to feel that our closest contact is with One who cannot bear sin—to realise that we are living in the presence of One whose ordinary manifestation of Himself is one of strength in holiness.

Effort in the spiritual life is good; but it is doubtful whether we do not in some degree take wrong views about it. We think more of holiness by effort, than holiness by habit. The latter is what is presented to us in the feet burning like fine brass. There Christ stands in the calmness of strength and light; and he would have the power and glory of his position operate on us.

We shall never know the power of Jesus if we look only at his cross, and forbear the looking at himself. His cross was only of avail because of what he was—if we have accepted it, we may pass beyond its violence into the calm of his present life, and draw strength for our spiritual life, not only from Christ's death for sin, but from his life in holiness—each day may be spent in the presence of the calm, brilliant power of the Holy One—the feet like unto fine brass being practically put with heavy tread on our rising sin—the manifested holiness of Jesus acting on us and for us with great strength.

We must conquer sin, not only by negative, but by positive means—not only by our view of Christ's death, but of his life. God meant us to go on from the cross when it had done its work—to live with a living Christ—yes, we are privileged not only laboriously to find out how holy he was in this and that acting in life, but to look at him as now fully revealed in the holy place itself.

This sight shall do wonders for us in our seekings after a holy life. We shall have all the power and spring which belong to companionship with the living—all the mighty influence which belongs to example—all that appertains to a presence. We shall take heed to our ways when we think of the feet like unto fine brass—to where we set our feet when we think of His feet.

And when sin rises up like a wreathing snake, and, perhaps ere we know anything about it, has risen so high that we cannot put our foot upon it, then are we not without help—then let us call to mind the feet of brass—their exaltation, their vantage ground, their strength, their purity; and they shall crush the head of the monster we dread, and we shall escape.

Let us in imagination lay the filthy thing beside the feet like unto fine brass, as though it burned in a furnace; and many a dark temptation, when thus exposed by that light, shall perish by the development of its own vileness; but if it should still put forth its strength, we may invoke the power of the feet to crush it—and they will.

Let us not be afraid of the holiness of these feet—or think that we do them wrong by asking that they may come into contact with and stamp upon our sin. His feet—even as His hands, and head, and all points of His humanity—are for us—there is nothing in the human form, or human mind, or exalted human position of Jesus, which does not fit into something human belonging to us. We may look at all and each, and say, "What is this, and this, and this, to me?"

There are some beautiful words of Edward Irving's on Christ's retention of his own holiness, while he deals with unholiness, which may encourage us. For though they speak principally of the treading down of Satan, still they apply as

well to the treading down of that Evil One in us, when we invoke Christ's aid that this should be done:—"After the same manner do I interpret the second symbol by which our Bishop is set forth, 'His feet like fine brass.' The word translated *fine brass*, is one to interpret which aright hath puzzled the learned. It is composed of two words; the one, the common word for brass, and the other derived from a root which signifies to flow, or to be liquid, or to melt. The true meaning of the word, therefore, would be brass made liquid, or melted. Now, we find that the laver and his foot (Exod. xxxviii. 8), in which the priests washed themselves, was made of the looking-glasses of the women which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Working upon this idea, it is a discovery not many years old, that if you take the finest brass, such as mirrors were wont to be made of, and cast it into the furnace, you produce another kind of brass, which shall take on no rust, nor tarnish from exposure to water or weather of any kind. Of this the laver and his foot were made, to the end that, though filled with water, and even exposed to the action of the air, they might never tarnish. And of this brass melted over again I believe our Lord's feet are represented to be in the passage before us, and because it is never tarnished, it is, as I think, said that his feet are like unto melted brass, as if they burned in a furnace.

"Now, what is the meaning of the symbol thus explained? It is to express His holiness, that when he should come to tread down his enemies, to tread the wicked under his feet, to tread the wine-press of the wrath of God, though he walked amongst defilement, and did tread upon abomination, yet were his feet not tarnished therewith, but remained in their original purity and brightness. This metal (*χαλκολιβάνον*), brass molten, is chosen because, as now appeareth, it taketh no tarnish from the pollution of the air, nor from the pollution of the earth, nor yet from the pollution of the sea. So, also, his eyes, though they look upon all iniquity, are not polluted therewith; and his feet, though they tread down all iniquity, are not polluted therewith. The fire refineth all things, and is not polluted with them. They come in contact with it, and their impurities are expelled. Their dross is carried off, and the pure metal floweth out in a pure stream.

"So, likewise, these feet of brass trample upon the lion and the adder and the young lion,—upon the mire and the clay and the mass of rottenness,—upon the devil, upon the grave, upon corruption, but are never defiled by any of them."

I need never shrink, then, from bringing my sin—the sin I hate and would flee from, and be rid of, into contact with Christ. For this purpose is the Son of God manifested, that he might

destroy the works of the devil—for this purpose manifested to me in glory, that he might destroy my sin. His feet, shining like fine brass, have power against my sin, even as they had when they hung upon the tree. "May they have more power," is the cry of every believer. "Stand beside me with thy glorious feet," is the longing of every earnest heart. Oh, where should we be, if Jesus could not stand in the midst of the vilest unholy-ness without being unholy himself? He it is who can walk upon coals and not be burned, who can touch pitch and not be defiled; therefore, I may invoke his presence and his power—the brightness and the strength of the feet like unto fine brass against the strength of the darkness of my temptation, or my sin.

On Satan especially will this power be brought to bear. Antichrist is to be destroyed with the brightness of the coming of the Lord. And as to Satan himself, he was doomed from the beginning to be destroyed by the crushing of these feet. On those feet was the bruised heel—and it was the bruised heel that was to be the crusher or bruiser of the serpent's head. There was to be a place of brightness, but it was first to be a place of suffering.

And, in truth, it was thus with Jesus, as it was to be with his Church. It is through sorrow we pass to joy, through gloom to light. Our places of suffering shall be places of brightness. There is something very teaching and comforting in the bruising of the heel, and the brightness of foot. Let us make use of it. Let us connect the very seat of trial with thoughts of joy; if the head be smitten of the Lord, then that head and those hairs are white like wool, as white as snow; and elsewhere we read that on that head were many crowns. The voice that cries, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is now as the sound of many waters. The pierced right hand has in it many stars. The visage marred more than that of any of the sons of men, is as the sun shining in its strength. The body first clothed with a mocking purple robe, and then stripped for crucifixion, is clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. For *our* weary foot or hand, for *our* pierced heart, for *our* aching head, there is an opposite of blessedness and joy for every grief they have respectively endured.

But we are now to speak of the power brought to bear on Satan. It will indeed be a crushing one. The brightness of Jesus is not manifested now in this world of shadow and gloom. Gleams of it are seen here and there, but the day of manifestation has not yet come. But when Jesus shall be revealed, Satan shall be struck down. That evil spirit has come into conflict with power many times, and with power in many forms, but it has always been that with the element of human

weakness and sin somewhere in it. But when he stands face to face with perfect holiness, it will smite him. He fled from it after the encounter in the wilderness, when Jesus was weak, as regards the flesh, from fasting; how much more will he have to flee when there shall be no reason why Jesus should veil his power in any way—when the time for crushing shall have come!

This will be the triumph of light. The light will drive the prince of darkness back into his own abyss. He will not only not come to the light because his deeds are evil, but he will flee from it, he will be driven before it. Great are the powers of light in nature, and equally great, yea, greater, in grace—the coming of the One with the feet like unto fine brass as though they burned in a furnace, will be the full sun-rising, of which we now have only feeble dawnings here and there.

Let us take courage, then, however great may be the present power of Satan, either in the world or in our own hearts. Let us have all the confidence inspired by the knowledge that we are on the winning side. Let us feel that we are contending with a doomed enemy. Let us hail every glimpse of the dawn of the brightness which shall destroy not only the devil's Antichrist, but the devil himself, and let us look forward to the full manifestation of the Sun of Righteousness himself. It is only by his coming that the night-clouds shall be dispelled, and the nations of the earth shall walk in light.

But we need not wait for a long-distant future ere we can receive light ourselves. We, too, must look to the future for full revelation, but Jesus may be brightening to us every day.

And thus our evil shall be consumed. Let us say, "Oh, my Saviour, be so bright in my soul that evil shall not be able to live in thy presence—come with light, ever more,—with light that the evil may appear dark, ever more dark—thus shall Satan be crushed in us, meeting in every believer a foretaste of his final and perfect doom.

The feet of Jesus are thus shining in the way of final development.

Christ always knew whither and to what he was going; the future always had its power with him. He looked to the end—he remembered the joy which was set before him. His Father did not expect him to go through the world, and his mission in it, without having light before him. He also had respect unto the recompense of reward.

We may remember that we do not serve God for nought, and that remembrance may exercise its influence on our life. It is God's plan always to set something before us—that we should be the people of hope, and reach forth to the object of our hope.

None who looked upon the wayworn feet of



(Drawn by H. JOHNSON.)

“ — their bright faces smiling approval,
As it lengthens out under my hand ”—p. 826.

Jesus could have known that, wrapped up in those travellings and wearinesses and nail-piercings was the brightness. They were as unlike it as the hard bud is unlike the unfolded flower, gorgeous in colour and sweet in its scent. But they were the germs which were to develop. Only they must develop in the proper time and way. Christ could not hurry the development of his own life into its eventual glory. Its bud, like all other buds, must unfold, it must not be picked to pieces. And so he passed through all his trials—he spent long years before he came out into ministry at all; he rejected the premature glory of sovereignty which men would have thrust upon him; he did not judge the world, for his time of judgment had not yet come.

To many the present might have seemed to be thrown away, to be all lost time, nothing to all human appearance was coming of it; but the future was maturing—that future of which in this passage we have a glimpse.

The present always has its use; it is never lost, never being thrown away, unless we will it to be so. Let us look at it in this light, ever saying, "This, and this, and this is an unfolding."

Alas! what a fearful unfolding lies before many—to what a final development are they going! They will be landed by a natural process in a terrible future.

And now a word or two upon Christ's ability to bring light with him. He has light in himself, and light for us.

Jesus walked in light himself while he was upon the earth, though men did not see that such was his path—his was that path of the just which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. "In

him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

But what could not be revealed on earth, is revealed in heaven—we are allowed to see what the feet and path of Jesus really are.

In all Christ's comings to us now, in all his ways with us, in all his leadings into duties, he comes with feet all light and bright. The duties and dispensations may seem dark, but if he be with us, his feet will bring light into them. The light will come in its own time. Jesus does not change dispensations—sorrow remains sorrow; but he comes with his own light into them, and then sorrow remains a sorrow, and yet is turned into joy.

Let us believe, then, in Christ's ability to bring light into all darkness. Let us seek to see the feet, and all will be well; let our anxiety be not lest we should fall into any trouble; but lest if we do, Jesus should not be in it.

There lies before me a place of shadows—the valley of the shadow of death. That valley I cannot enter without Christ. But with him, even of that place I may say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

The feet of light are what I hope for there—the feet light, and the footfalls on before me light also, so that I need not be afraid. I shall know that they are the once-pierced feet, and, therefore, they are mine—they are the feet which lay in the grave, and are now all glorious, and all for me, coupling the darkness of the tomb with the radiance which lies beyond.

CLOVER CHAINS.



ONLY a clover chain linking,

To pleasure the children who stand
With their bright faces smiling approval,
As it lengthens out under my hand.

Only a clover chain linking,
To add to a summer day's bliss;
To set little hearts all a-dancing,
And win for my gerdon a kiss.

It is done—and away fly my darlings,
The chain that they prized, till complete,
In their frolics already forgotten,
And crushed by their haste 'neath their feet.

And I—left alone—idly weaving
Those thoughts, not all pleasure nor pain,
Discern why it is the world-weary
Oft wish themselves children again:

As glad in the joy of the present,
As careless of what is to be;
As transiently touched by life's changes,
From its vices as pleasantly free.

Heart! dost thou cherish such yearnings?
Weariest thou in the fight?
Too early borne back in the battle,
Too eager to reach to the light?

Nay, for faith groweth with chast'ning—
Nay, for the cross brings the crown;
The Hand that in tenderness smiteth
Ne'er crusheth the penitent down!

But if in our life daily linking
More patience, more meekness, and love,
Who would not be child-like and trustful,
Till the golden gates open above?

LOUISA CROW.

THE DINGY HOUSE AT KENSINGTON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ABOUT NELLIE," "THE TROUBLES OF CHATTY AND MOLLY," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.



EARLY a year had passed since Jack's death, and Polly and her father were still alone in the dingy house. The former was going to leave it at the end of the summer, to reside with her Aunt Maria at Benthwaite. This had been arranged by Henry Dawson, for he told Polly that he intended to let the house and live in lodgings. He had altered in the year; he had still his old love—nay, adoration for money, but it had made him almost reckless in his desire to accumulate. He was as cold and as careful as ever, resolutely discouraging all efforts Polly had made to soften him, or win even the affection he had extended to Jack.

Early in the spring Richard Brandford had returned, and had soon re-established himself on his old friendly footing; nay, he had done much more. He had found Polly so changed as to astonish him, and he had gradually discovered that she made life very pleasant for him. She was altered—altered by the self-culture of which he had sown the seeds, by the reading for which he had given her the taste, and the power and exercise of thought, which he had first shown her she lacked. Then, too, his was a quiet nature; he had his faults, and he was indolent and ease-loving, but he so abhorred the littlenesses of the world, so unconsciously made the best and wisest laws of life the unacknowledged rule of his, that she trying, however feebly, to imitate him, lost those little frivolities and cramped ideas which had so marred her character. He had left her—a child to be petted and spoilt; but he found her—a child in some things still perhaps, but a woman it was easy also to love and admire. She was not very clever perhaps, but men of the Richard Brandford type do not require more than quickness and intelligence; a wife to love, and to love them, whose sweet tones, and sunny smiles, and thoughtful ways make up a home. So it began to dawn upon him that it would be very pleasant to go through life with the gypsy face by his side. It is very nice to be cared for, and though he was not at all conceited, he could not help feeling that this girl did care for him, so little by little the small links wove into a strong chain, and Richard Brandford, dreaming idly over his books, realised at last that he was in love with Polly Dawson. He did not tell her so, not till the summer had passed and he had only four days more in town before returning to Benthwaite. Then one morning it happened that Polly was going to Ealing, and by chance told him so, and when she arrived at the Paddington Station was very much surprised to find him there also, but he made some excuse that he thought he would run down by train for a change and walk back.

Polly was so much astonished that she forgot all about taking her ticket until the last moment, and then, while she was fumbling for her purse, which she always carefully hid in her dress—though the average sum it contained was three and sixpence—he took tickets for each of them as a matter of course, at which she coloured and felt awkward, for she felt she ought to have taken her own.

They got into an empty carriage, and when they were comfortably off the magnificent sum he had paid for her fare again dwelt heavily on her mind. "I ought to pay him back," she thought, "or say something about it at any rate. First-class carriages are very nice, I'd always travel in them if I could," mentally ignoring the fact that as a rule she never travelled at all. It is always awkward for a woman to speak to a man about money affairs, and Polly, unused to the ways of the world, and utterly ignorant that the happiness of defraying small expenses for young ladies, who usually look perfectly unconscious of the proceeding, is one of the advantages of the sterner sex, found it doubly so.

"Mr.——" she began at last, then stopped and looked confused, and hesitated.

"Miss——" he answered, opening his eyes at her in amusement.

"I wish you wouldn't," she said, turning away, the recollection of that unfortunate payment vanishing in her indignation at his presuming to mimic her.

"Wouldn't do what?" he asked.

"Nothing," trying to be cross and dignified, but only succeeding in appearing slightly ruffled, which was becoming on the whole. "Nothing at all," getting up and going to the farthest corner of the carriage, and pretending to look out of window.

"Well, tell me what you were going to say," he asked again, following her up, "what was it?"

"I shan't tell you," flattening her face against the window-pane.

"That's very rude," he said reprovingly.

"What is?" mentally hoping she had not dirtied the tip of her nose against the glass, which was dusty, and trying to ascertain by closing one eye and looking straight down it—that is, as straight down as nature and circumstances would permit; "what is very rude, pray?"

"To say 'shan't;' good little girls never use such words."

"I wish you wouldn't talk in that way to me. I am not a good little girl, I am a young woman."

"Indeed."

"I am nearly twenty years old, sir," turning quickly round and looking at him with a flushed face.

"Well, I cannot help that, can I?" resting his hands on her shoulders, and looking at the downcast eyes and crimson cheeks. "How can you be so disagreeable, Polly."

"I am sure I am not disagreeable," she answered helplessly.

"Yes, you are very disagreeable. Don't you know how fond I am of you?" he added suddenly.

"No, I don't," she said chokingly, venturing to raise her eyes for a moment, but instantly hiding them beneath the heavy lids again.

"Yes, you do, you little witch," he said quietly and gravely; "you know I am very, very fond of you," and he stooped and kissed her, while Polly murmured in surprise and confusion.

"Oh no, you cannot be, how can you? Oh, here's the station," dolefully and in quite another tone, devoutly wishing that station at Jericho, in which case she would have had a considerable distance farther to travel. They got out and walked across the fields towards the Alburys almost in silence. "I will leave you just before we get to the house," he said; "and I will come or write to-morrow." She only said a simple "Yes" in reply, but she looked up in his face half frightened, half wondering, and she thought to herself almost chokingly, "Oh, how different he is from all the world, and how happy I am!" and when he left her, though she said a good-bye that almost puzzled him, it was so cold, she stood watching as he disappeared across the summer field, and she put her hands up to her face to be sure she was awake, and strained her eyes till he was quite out of sight. "Oh, Dick! my darling, there is no one in the world like you; and oh, what should I do if it was only a dream?" she said as she turned and went on her way to the Alburys.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN Polly returned from Ealing on the following afternoon she found two letters for her. One from Cumberland, the other from Richard Brandford. She opened the latter first. It was the first and last love-letter she ever had from him, and it ran thus:

"MY DEAR POLLY,—Have just had a telegram, and am obliged to start for the North at once. Will write from there. Yours affectionately,

"RICHARD BRANDFORD."

"Oh," she said disappointedly; "it is not a very sentimental letter. Robert Welch used to say 'dearest Polly,' which was much nicer," and she proceeded to read it again. "'Yours affectionately,' it was only 'yours sincerely' last time. He would not put that if he did not mean it, for it is not as if I were his sister or his cousin, or even a girl he had known a very long time." Then she slowly opened her aunt's letter. It commenced with an expression of regret that Polly could not come to her sooner, and continued:—

"I have sent you a little present, my dear, which Miss Clayton, who went to town yesterday, has kindly taken charge of, and said she should call upon you herself and bring. I hope she

will like you, as you will often see her here, for next month she is going to be married to Mr. Richard Brandford of this place."

Polly did not start or scream, but she looked round for a moment to be sure that she was awake, and out of the window, and shaded her eyes from the sunshine, and wondered absently what the present was. Then she read the letter again. "It must be some mistake," she said. She did not cry or sob, she had no sense of anger, no passionate rebellion, but she sat down, stupefied and dazed. "What shall I do?" she murmured; "oh, Dick, what shall I do?" A knock came, and a card was brought into her with Miss Clayton's name on it, and she almost smiled and received her visitor calmly and composedly. Everything had been so sudden, she was stunned and dazed, and could not feel or care or thoroughly understand. Miss Clayton was a very pretty girl, fair and aristocratic looking, and she seemed lively and amusing, and tried to make herself agreeable, hoping to see much of Miss Dawson, when her home was at Benthwaite. Polly looked up at her beautiful face and golden hair, at her silk dress and glittering rings, and then her heart sank. "No," she thought, "he cannot love me when he has seen her." She listened to her visitor's pleasant chatter almost wonderstruck, with a miserable longing to rush away from her and lie down and die, or to kneel at her feet and entreat her not to marry that man. She had wealth, beauty—everything which she had not; surely she might be content? Oh, she was mad! she must be mad. One lingering doubt she determined to set at rest.

"Miss Clayton," she said suddenly, "are you going to be married to Mr. Richard Brandford?" She did not say she knew him. Her visitor looked surprised. Well she might.

"Yes," she said.

"Have you been engaged long?" she asked desperately.

"Why, yes, ever since we were children," she answered, rising to go. Then every thought of self died out of the girl's heart as the old love rose in it—love which was strong enough to be glad for his happiness, even at the expense of her own.

"I hope you will be very happy," she said, as softly and humbly as Rebecca laid her jewels at Rowena's feet, while she looked up as hopelessly as the Jewess did at the fair and beautiful face. "I cannot understand it," she said sorrowfully, when her visitor had gone, and her lips began to tremble, and her eyes to fill with tears. She had learnt to love him so much lately. Her mother and Jack were gone, and she had no one else even to like; no sister, no friend, no girl-companion, not even the remembrance of any one. He was first and last, the one person she had loved above and beyond all others, and he had treated her thus! and yet she could not be angry with him. "How could he look at me when he had seen her?" she repeated. Then she pulled out his letter,

the last she was ever to receive from him, and read it, and kissed it, and lingered over it as a woman will, and leant her head down upon it on the arm of the chair and sobbed bitterly. "I can't be angry with him, I love him so!" she exclaimed. Then suddenly a thought struck her, and she raised herself, while a flush dyed her cheeks and brow and throat. "He said yesterday he was 'very fond of me,' but he said not a word about marrying me! Oh! he thinks I am not good enough. I am only the lawyer's daughter whom all his set have patronised!" She rose and walked up and down. "That must be it," she cried passionately; "and he does not say a word of regret at going in his letter. That must be it. Oh! how blind I have been! He thought me good enough to flirt with, but not good enough to marry. I know what I will do," she said presently, in a quiet, determined tone. All her tears and sobs had vanished, and a feeling of scorn for him and shame for herself had taken their place. "He shall not think he has done just as he pleased with me. I will write to him as if I had heard nothing. I've just time before the post goes out." She got her mother's desk, which was handy, though at another time she would not have used it from sheer reverence, and after many attempts wrote:

"DEAR MR. BRANDFORD,—I write to tell you I am very sorry about yesterday, for I fear I said a great many things I did not mean. Will you please not write to me any more! Yours sincerely,
"MARY DAWSON."

She folded and directed it to The Laurels at Benthwaite, posted it herself, and then proceeded to put away the pen and paper in the desk. A little box caught her eye in one corner of it, and she pulled it out. It contained the brooch she had bought for her mother long ago, and she read through her tears the inscription on the lid. "Oh, mamma!" she cried; "oh, dear—dear, mamma! if I only had you still, or if I could only come to you!" Then Jack's question rose to her memory, "Are you afraid?" She stood still for a moment. "I am so earth-bound," she said, "so lonely and so wretched! Ah, me!" she sobbed, "God is wise to send us sorrow; if we found all our happiness in the world, what heart should we have left for heaven?"

Polly waited day after day for an answer to her letter, but none came. She hardly expected one, she knew he was too proud even to defend himself. She regretted her cold words to him then. "They were my last," she said; "I might have made them kind." A woman so soon forgives a wrong when her heart is concerned, and Richard Brandford was already pardoned, but she did not hear from him again. Then in the bitter waking and loneliness which followed on her sorrow—the greatest that girlhood ever knows, one which often tinges a whole life with its bitterness—Polly sought for refuge and strength to endure where only it was to be found. So the days passed on, and when September came a

bill was put in the dining-room window of the dingy house, signifying that it was to be let.

Henry Dawson became very anxious-looking suddenly, and told Polly to hasten her arrangements for going to Benthwaite; but she was not alarmed, he had cried "wolf" so long in respect to poverty that she no longer believed in it; moreover, she dreaded going to Benthwaite, for she knew Richard Brandford would be there. She put it off as long as she could, until at last a day came on which her father told her she must be ready to start in a week. "Do you hear?" he said to her, wildly and excitedly, "you must be right out of the place in a week, if you hope to escape with your clothes. I am a poor man—I have told you so all along, and I have lost the little I had by trying to increase it, as every man has a right to try and do." Polly looked up, and seeing his face believed him, yet she did not dare say even a word of sympathy.

When he went out that morning she began slowly and sorrowfully to pack up her few possessions. Poor little Polly! with her bright face grave, and sweet eyes so often tearful, with no flush on her cheeks and no smile on her lips. The fresh, joyous life had been crushed out of her so soon, and her heart could not forget its bitterness or its tenderness, and the hands with which she tried to cling to holier things loosened their hold so often to clasp each other in dumb misery and vain remembrance!

She had scarcely finished her packing and was sitting down to rest, when suddenly a cab came to the door, and the next moment Robert Welch was once more with her in the dingy house.

"Polly," he said almost stiffly, "I have come to town on purpose to see your father; when will he be home?"

"I don't know, probably not till the evening. What is the matter?" she asked; "you seem so strange."

"Nothing is the matter. Polly, did you know your Uncle Frederic died more than a year ago?"

"No, certainly not."

"Well, he did, and that is why I have come to town. I am glad you did not know it, Polly," and he looked at her with eyes which showed he was the same Robert Welch of old at heart, though he was a more prosperous, well-to-do, business-like young man. "I am so glad to see you again, Polly," he said, as he flung the *Times* carelessly down on the table, and watched her while she glanced almost vacantly over the first column. Presently her face became pale, and she clasped her hands under the table and kept her lips tightly shut, lest she should scream or cry with pain, for her eyes were resting upon—

"On the 20th inst., at St. George's, Hanover Square, Richard Brandford, Esq., of Benthwaite, Cumberland, to Clara, only daughter of the late Charles Clayton, Esq."

(To be continued.)

KATIE'S JACKET.

BY THE HON. MRS. GREENE, AUTHOR OF "CUSHIONS AND CORNERS," ETC.

PART II.

THE drive to Aunt Mary's was all through quiet country lanes or pretty wooded glens, where the trees were ruddy with the autumn tints. Everything smelt so sweet and looked so beautiful in the still, sudden glow of an early winter sunset, that Katie grew more and more tranquil in her mind as they rolled along, and even Looney's ruffled spirit could not resist the influence of the evening drive and the anticipation of so many promised pleasures.

As the carriage drew nearer and nearer to the turreted gateway of The Cedars, many more vehicles came in sight, some in front of them and some behind them, and not a few drawn by high-mettled horses passed them on the road, with their burden of gaily and fashionably dressed children.

Just for a moment a hot sting of pain seemed to pass right through poor Katie's breast as one carriage rolled past them—one which she knew quite well, and in which was seated Marion Strangways, her great, great friend, dressed in her new sealskin jacket, which her father had just brought her from Paris, and the pretty little sealskin hat to match, with a white ostrich feather in the front, just tipped with the green gloss of a peacock's breast.

Looney, who by this time had entirely recovered her composure, nodded and smiled to Marion quite cheerfully, and even turned round in the carriage so as to take in all the etceteras of Marion's new attire, while poor Katie's eyes involuntarily reverted to her own unfortunate jacket, and a very long and unhappy sounding sigh escaped from her.

"Look, Katie dear, at the beautiful red band of light behind the fir-trees!" cried Mrs. Browne, apparently unconscious of the painful thoughts struggling within her daughter's mind; "the sun must be going down already; it will be nearly dark, I should think, by the time we reach Aunt Mary's door."

Katie instantly looked up and nodded brightly, for she felt the kind encouragement her mother's words were intended to convey, and comforted herself in the thought that in the gloaming of their arrival, her clothes might pass muster in the crowd, and that afterwards, in all probability, they would take off their out-door clothes and put them aside in another room, until the time for their departure.

But, alas for poor Katie! the sun had not quite gone down when they drew up in front of Aunt Mary's pillared portico, and its dying light fell right across the children's figures as they descended the steps of the carriage and alighted amidst a host of assembled guests, who, of course, having little else to do at this moment, and being chiefly composed of young,

inquisitive minds scanned anxiously the dress and *tout-ensemble* of the new arrivals.

Katie could not help feeling that many eyes were fixed upon her as she advanced to greet Aunt Mary, whose easy chair had been placed beneath the portico to receive her guests, and her face, usually smiling and joyous, betrayed a most unhappy consciousness of self.

"Good evening, Kate, my darling, and you, Looney dear, I am glad to see you," cried the cheery voice of Aunt Mary, as she rose up to meet them. "But how comes it that you are all so late? I thought you would have been here in time to help me to receive my friends. The archery is all over, and the croquet ground is nearly deserted—however, better late than never." Here a slight pause occurred in Aunt Mary's kindly reception while her keen eyes sought first to unravel the uneasiness apparent on the faces of both her little nieces, and then travelled slowly over every article of Katie's out-door garments, so curiously at variance with the usual neat arrangement of her dress.

For a moment she glanced with a puzzled air from the children to their mother, but, recollecting herself, she continued her cordial welcome. "Better late than never," she repeated, as she wrung the hands of both children. "I think, though, my dears, as the sun is setting, and these autumn evenings are treacherous, it is nearly time to withdraw our forces in-doors. Looney dear, you go and summon all your little friends from the croquet grounds and shrubberies, and all you young ladies and gentlemen who prefer to remain outside for the present, remember, when the gong sounds it is time to come in-doors and take your places for the magic, whilst you and I, Katie, must come inside, for I need sadly some one to give me a helping hand in the arrangement of one or two things for the conjurer, which I could not well manage by myself. You, Anna," she continued, turning to her elder niece, Mrs. Browne, "you must receive the remainder of my guests who have not yet arrived, while I go and have a final interview with our Japanese friends."

Oh, how silently thankful Katie felt in her heart, for being thus quietly removed from the public gaze, and she followed her aunt across the wide hall and up the handsome staircase to her room with grateful steps. It must be confessed she longed to unburden her whole heart to Aunt Mary, so as to free herself from the accusation of untidiness or careless indifference, but this confession would, in reality, be treachery to Looney, and Katie determined, come what might, as far as truth would allow her, to set a seal upon her lips.

"Here, Katie dear, you can place your hat and jacket

upon my bed," said her aunt, kindly, as she closed the door behind her, "for I shall want your assistance in a great many things, which you could not manage so easily in your out-door clothes. Let me help you to untie your hat," and Aunt Mary, with neat fingers, sought to untwist the somewhat rope-like knot into which the strings of Katie's old hat had got fastened.

"Oh, thank you, Aunt Mary, I think I can manage it myself," cried Katie, seeking anxiously to take the knot into her own hand. "Please let me undo it, Aunt Mary, I know how I fastened it myself."

"How comes it that Looey has on her new hat and you your old one?" asked her aunt, very quietly and kindly, as she relinquished the knot into Kate's keeping.

"Oh, Martha was not able to finish mine in time; it was only half trimmed when the carriage came round to the door, and we were so late already, we could not wait any longer," stammered Kate, uneasily.

"But Looey's was trimmed in time, and looks very neat and pretty," continued Aunt Mary, interrogatively, while she quietly unbuttoned her niece's jacket and drew it gently from her arms.

"Yes, Martha trimmed Looey's first, because, you know, Looey's hat is a little smaller than mine, and she thought—at least, I thought—she would have time to finish mine afterwards."

"A very good excuse, but very bad logic," laughed Aunt Mary kindly. "And why, may I ask, did you wear Looey's jacket instead of your own? Was it on the same principle that being so much smaller, it would take less time to put on—eh, Katie dear?" and Aunt Mary's bright, inquisitive eyes looked towards Katie for an answer.

"How did you know it was Looey's?" cried Katie in hot confusion, while the red blush which rushed over every inch of her face forced the tingling tears into her eyes. "I thought you would never guess it, I was sure," and Katie, not knowing what further to add, turned away her face, and tried hard by staring at the picture over the mantelpiece to keep back the sob, which had been struggling this ten minutes in her throat.

"Ah, little birds tell me many things," said Aunt Mary, glancing for a moment curiously at the jacket, which she afterwards folded neatly, and put aside on the bed, all the time goodnaturedly ignoring her niece's confusion. "But I must not pretend to be a greater conjuror than I really am. Looey's initials, you see, are marked on a piece of tape inside the jacket, and I really could not help seeing them, nor the long darn which, I suppose, also helped to delay Martha in her work."

"No—no, I darned it myself," gulped Kate, in what seemed to her a necessary exculpation of Martha's needlework. "I—I only knew it was torn this morning, and I could not do it any better, for the skin burst nearly every time I put the needle into it. I know I must have looked dreadfully untidy when I

got out of the carriage, but indeed—indeed, Aunt Mary, I could not help it."

"Indeed—indeed, my dear little Katie, you could have helped it if you had liked," replied her aunt with a little dry laugh, "you could not persuade me that you put it on by mistake, or liked it better than your own; but perhaps you preferred helping another,—eh? However, never mind, my love; I confess your turn-out was not as rich or pretty as Marion Strangeways', but 'handsome is that handsome does,' and though I love neatness and tidiness, still I am not so blind yet but I can admire a kind face under an old hat, and a generous heart under a stained jacket. Come now, dry your eyes, Katie darling, and let us go down-stairs; there will be nobody to see you but the conjurors and myself, and we shall all be too busy preparing for our friends to have time to look at each other."

Before these kind words Katie's grief melted away. She smoothed her hair and put on as bright a face as she could, and followed her aunt down-stairs, and she soon, in the bustle of preparation and the excitement of looking on, forgot altogether her day's trouble, and not one of the children enjoyed their magic more heartily, or entered more completely into the evening's fun and entertainment.

(To be concluded in our next.)

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

307. A prophecy of Amos respecting the altar at Bethel was fulfilled by means of one of the kings of Judah. Prove this.

308. Quote, in our Lord's own words, the only conditions on which any one can be his disciple.

309. Give a text from Ezekiel by which it appears that he had a conviction of a future life.

310. Give, in the words of Scripture, the object of the building of the Tower of Babel.

311. "The Lord's day" has a twofold reference in the New Testament. Where?

312. Mention the occasions on which "the half of the kingdom" was promised as a present.

313. We are distinctly told that the acts of Jehoshaphat not mentioned in the Books of the Kings and Chronicles are to be found in another book. Name it.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 799.

297. Elijah anointed Elisha to be a prophet in his room (1 Kings xix. 16).

298. Athaliah (2 Kings xi. and 2 Chron. xxiii.).

299. 2 Chron. xvi. 7, 12.

300. Deut. xx. 5—8.

301. He had servants (Mark i. 20); his son John was known to the high priest (John xviii. 15); Christ when dying committed his mother to the care of John, thus implying that he had the means of providing for her (John xix. 27).

302. Exod. xxxiv. 23, 24.

BIBLE NOTES.

GIVING SIGHT TO TWO BLIND MEN IN THE HOUSE (Matt. ix. 27-31).

TWO blind men followed him, crying, and saying, *Thou son of David, have mercy on us.* In the synagogue of Nazareth our Lord applied a prophecy to himself in which it was intimated that the recovery of sight to the blind was to be one of the works of the Messiah, and in this miracle, the first of its kind recorded in the Gospels, we see a fulfilment of it. The cry that these two afflicted creatures addressed in common to him was not attended to at first. Their faith was evidently put to the test. They must have heard of some of the mighty works he had already done. Some one must have told them that the Great Wonder-worker was approaching, and therefore in confidence they ask him as he draws near to show pity upon them. They address him by what appears to have been the favourite title among the people for designating the Messiah—one which he never used himself, calling himself instead “the son of man,” a title of far deeper significance. They probably thought that they had nothing more to do than ask and have their request instantly complied with. And this is the point at which their faith is put to the test. Not in an instant did they obtain their request. He who went about doing good seemed at first to withdraw himself from them. He heard their cries for help, but apparently paid no regard to them, and went on his way as though their appeal reached not his ears.

“*And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus said unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? they said unto him, Yea, Lord.*” Not in the least discouraged by the seeming want of attention paid to their urgent request, they follow him even into the house to which he went, testifying in this manner the earnestness of their desires, and giving ample proof of that faith which was welling up in their hearts, and which found expression first in their eager call for mercy, and now in their following him, in the full reliance that He who had shown pity upon others would do something for them. The question Christ puts to them shows that he had heard their cry, and was now about to take notice of it. As a preliminary step he sounds the depth of their faith, and gets a confession of it from their own lips. When he receives from them an acknowledgment of his power over their disease and weakness, and not till then, he gives them a convincing proof that he was able to do what they were asking for. “He touched their eyes,” and that simple action was quite enough; it unsealed for them their closed eyes, and opened out to their view the natural

beauties of the world by which they were surrounded. As he laid his hands upon those darkened eyes he exclaimed, “According to your faith be it unto you.” We are not left in doubt as to the result, their faith was strong enough to gain for them the blessing of sight. Had there been no faith in them, they might have called in vain, and their eyes would not have been opened. We are thus taught that faith is the conducting link between man’s wants and God’s riches, and that without faith in the true acceptance of the word we are as nothing in his sight.

“*And Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.*” The Master laid upon these recipients of his mercy this earnest, indeed almost threatening injunction of silence. In other cases he forbade not those who had received blessings at his hands to tell to all with whom they came in contact what great things he had done for them. Why this difference then? We know not. Let us rest satisfied that he had his own reasons for the course he pursued in each case. Let us not seek to be wise above what is written, neither let us fall into the error of those who say that though Christ gave them these strict orders to observe silence respecting what he had done for them, he did so merely out of humility, but had no wish that he should be obeyed. Surely all his life, as depicted for us in the Gospels, from his entrance on his public ministry till the day he ascended into heaven, gives the lie to such a supposition as this. These two men disobeyed the command of Christ, and herein showed a defect in that faith which was great enough to draw benefits to them from him, but which showed its weakness in not doing what he bade them do. They pass away from the scene before us, giving a proof of their reliance on Christ’s mercy, combined with a proof that they were after all simply erring human beings.

From a contemplation of this little history, may we learn in the time of our distress to cry mightily unto Him, who, though absent from us in his bodily presence, is ever near to hear us and answer our petition when offered in true faith; may no discouragement at what we feel inclined to regard as want of sympathy with us on his part, prevent us from coming again and again and wrestling with him, until we obtain what we want and what he sees we require. May we do his will in all things, ever remembering that “to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”